

Warden Message

October 23, 2008

Dear Warden and Registrant:

Please share the following information with all American citizens as soon as possible. Please contact the American Citizen Services section via e-mail (ConsularQuito@state.gov) or telephone 398-5000 ext. 3800, if you have any questions.

The U.S. Embassy in Ecuador wishes to inform American citizens visiting or resident in Ecuador that the country has experienced a rise in violent crime. American citizens have been victims of numerous violent crimes, including armed robberies, home invasions, homicides, and sexual assaults. Ecuadorian nationals have also experienced this increase in violent crime and have held protests demanding that the government take decisive action. On October 21, 2008, the Ecuadorian National Police (ENP) put an emergency operations plan into effect due to the rise of criminal activity and will increase its police presence and activity in Ecuador's 24 provinces. American citizens should anticipate police checkpoints throughout the country, and be sure to carry all required documents while driving. These documents include: cedula or passport, driver's license, vehicle registration, proof of insurance, and license plates.

American citizens are reminded that criminals have especially targeted people using ATMs and other services at local banks in Ecuador. The U.S. Embassy recommends that U.S. citizens avoid making large withdrawals from local banks in Quito and throughout Ecuador. When possible, use wire transfers when completing transactions involving large sums of money. If large withdrawals or deposits from local banks cannot be avoided, we recommend varying travel routes and deposit/withdrawal times so criminals cannot easily recognize a pattern. Banks and ATMs located in well traveled areas, such as shopping malls, are generally safer than facilities on the street. Law enforcement officials in Ecuador and elsewhere recommend that victims not resist their assailants. Criminals in Ecuador are less likely to become violent if you surrender your valuables without resistance.

Violent crime tends to be more common in the larger cities, but American citizens have also been victims of armed robbery and violent assaults in remote areas of Ecuador. Americans should avoid deserted hiking trails and beaches, and infrequently traveled roads, as well as the interior regions of large city parks, particularly at night.

American citizens are encouraged to maintain a high level of vigilance and to take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness. Please see the section on Crime in the Country Specific Information Sheet on Ecuador for more specific information. If an American is the victim of a crime, please contact the Embassy in Quito or Consulate in Guayaquil immediately.

Americans living or traveling in Ecuador are encouraged to register with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate through the State Department's travel registration website, <https://travelregistration.state.gov>, and to obtain updated information on travel and security within Ecuador. Americans without Internet access may register directly with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. By registering, American citizens make it easier for the Embassy or Consulate to contact them in case of emergency. Please see the following links for local warden message information in Quito and Guayaquil, respectively, <http://ecuador.usembassy.gov> and <http://guayaquil.usconsulate.gov>.

U.S. citizens should consult the Country Specific Information for Ecuador and the latest Travel Alerts and Warnings and Worldwide Caution at the Department's web site at <http://travel.state.gov>. Updated information on travel and security in Ecuador may also be obtained from the Department of State by calling 1-888-407-4747 within the United States or by calling 1-202-501-4444 outside the United States.

The U.S. Embassy in Quito is located at Avigiras E12-170 y Eloy Alfaro. The telephone during business hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) is (011) 593 2 398 5000 X3800. Within the same city use the last seven digits. Add the city code for intercity telephone calls. See also the Embassy web site at <http://ecuador.usembassy.gov>. American Citizen walk-in hours are between 1:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday thru Thursday, excluding U.S. and Ecuadorian holidays.

The U.S. Consulate General in Guayaquil is located at the corner of Avenida 9 de Octubre and Garcia Moreno (near the Hotel Oro Verde); telephone (011-593-4) 232-3570 during business hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) or 232-1152 for after-hours emergencies; fax (011-593-4) 232-0904. See the Consulate General web site at <http://guayaquil.usconsulate.gov>.